

# KEEPING FIT



JAN 15 1938

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

RUPERT BLUE, SURGEON GENERAL

Issued in cooperation with the Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Education.

This pamphlet is for boys 14 and over. A similar pamphlet for men is entitled "Man-Power."

## **BE A "CLASS ONE A" MAN.**

Your body is your life-time, willing servant. Abuse it—it will be patient, but when it takes revenge it takes it a thousandfold. Give it a square deal, and it will give you a square deal and more—it will give you back pure blood and strong, skilled muscles and a clear brain for your future happiness, your country's service, and the world's work.

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V. D. Pamphlet No. 1.

First edition issued June, 1918, by Bureau of Education in cooperation with Medical Section, Council of National Defense.

Revised October, 1918, February, 1919, and issued by Public Health Service,  
228 First Street N. W., Washington, D. C.

# KEEPING FIT

During the war all the fighting nations learned the supreme value of man-power. Idlers were put to work and every possible method was adopted which would help to bring each worker up to top-notch efficiency.

The years just ahead will make demands no less severe on the nation's manhood. Work at full capacity and top speed in factory, mine, farm, and railroad will be needed to replenish the world's depleted store of material goods. Clear brains, keen intelligence, and physical endurance will be required for the manifold scientific, professional, constructive, and humane tasks that face us. Each individual member of the coming generation of America's young men is the more valuable and responsible because so many of his older brothers the world over are missing.

Fitness—physical, mental, and moral—depends fundamentally on health. This means not only the avoidance of diseases and defects, but positive, abundant health—prime condition of mind and body. Every young man in America, to be worthy of the heritage left him by the heroes of the battlefield, should know the laws of physical and mental efficiency and live up to them. Keeping fit for America's task in the new world is the present obligation on every youth of the land.

## HANDICAPS REVEALED BY WAR.

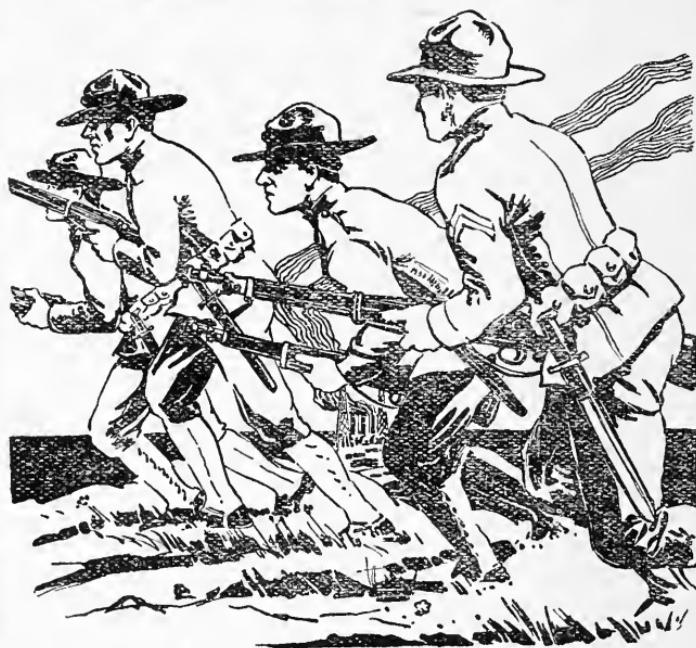
The examination of men for our armies revealed the causes which produced the greatest number of physical "ineffectives" and rejections. Aside from wounds, the principal causes were defective eyesight, poor teeth, bad feet, and venereal diseases.

The facts here presented are aimed to reduce inefficiency from these four causes. The self-discipline and healthy activities required to prevent these diseases and defects will be found to be the means also of abundant health, vigor, and general well-being.

### DEFECTIVE EYES.

The human eye is one of the most marvelous and delicate mechanisms known, and, next to the vital organs, the most important part of the body. Yet most of us abuse our eyes unmercifully.

# WHAT FITNESS DEMANDS



1. Muscular Strength
2. Endurance
3. Energy
4. Will Power
5. Courage
6. Self-Control

Close your eyes and for a half minute imagine yourself blind. . . . In warfare false eyesight is almost as useless as blindness.

The most frequent kinds of poor eyesight causing rejection from the Army were near and far sightedness and astigmatism. The same conditions, of course, handicap a man almost as much in civilian life.

Certain defects in the original structure of the eye itself can not be cured, and can only be corrected by glasses properly fitted by a competent oculist.

Certain other defects, due to mistreatment of the eyes, can be cured by proper glasses which, so to speak, "train" the eye back to normal. Some kinds of defects, such as certain cases of "cross-eyes," may be helped by a slight operation. Slight muscular defects often cause severe eyestrain without the patient knowing what is wrong.

Still other eye troubles affect chiefly the lids, or attack the lids first and only later affect the eyesight itself. Proper medical treatment will usually cure these conditions. Certain infected cases, however, may leave permanent scars.

Varieties of eye trouble are so numerous that they can not be described here, nor would it be wise for you to try to treat yourself, for the symptoms of very different complaints are often so nearly alike—headache, redness, dimness, etc.—that only a physician can prescribe properly. For any continued discomfort, go to a reliable eye specialist (ophthalmologist or oculist).

It is unwise to ask an optician to prescribe for eye defects. An optician is, or should be, merely one who makes the glasses ordered by the physician, and it is no safer to go directly to the optician than it would be to go to a druggist for surgical treatment.

It is possible, however, for you to know how to avoid preventable eye trouble. Many a man's career has been handicapped because he neglected these apparently simple rules:

1. When reading, writing, etc., be sure to have good, clear light, preferably over the left shoulder if writing, and not directly in the eyes or reflected sharply from the paper.
2. Do not hold the eyes less than 12 inches from your work.
3. Do not use the eyes too long continuously—rest them a few minutes occasionally by closing them or looking into the distance to relax them. One should do this at least every hour, especially if reading fine type or doing intense, delicate work.
4. Do not use your eyes much on a vibrating train or car, or go too often to motion pictures. They strain the eyes.

5. Keep away from places where stone chips, sparks, or emery dust is flying, or wear goggles.
6. If strong light bothers you, wear slightly brown non-magnifying glasses outdoors, with a broad-brimmed hat.
7. Avoid the common towel and do not rub the eyes with dirty hands. Contagious eye disease is spread in these two ways.

#### DEFECTIVE TEETH.

It should hardly be necessary, in this day, to emphasize the importance of clean teeth. Bad teeth are not only the producers of toothache, but also harbores of disease germs. The mouth is the gateway to the throat and stomach, and it pays to keep it clean. Poisons absorbed from diseased teeth may cause intense suffering and loss of health.

The correct way to brush teeth is with a medium soft brush, with an up-and-down stroke, bearing away from the gums toward the points of the teeth, so as to get the food from between the teeth without violently pushing back the gums.

Even if you keep teeth properly cleaned daily, it pays to have them examined and cleaned by a good dentist once in six months, to prevent decay and avoid disease.

#### DEFECTIVE FEET.

In battle an army gets from where it is to where it is going on feet. A good general takes almost as much care for his men's feet and stomachs as he does for their powder and shot.

Men were not rejected for corns and bunions, unless they interfered with wearing a military shoe, or with weight-carrying power; but they are a nuisance, and they can be avoided by having properly fitted shoes, snug but not pressing or stubbing the joints or toes. The Army "last" is a safe and good-looking shoe.

Cleanliness is of the utmost importance in keeping the feet in condition. Unless this is attended to systematically, the skin becomes softened and irritated by cast-off particles of skin, dirt, and perspiration; hence blisters and abrasions are more likely to form.

The most frequent foot trouble serious enough to cause rejection and real handicap was the fallen arch, or "flat foot." This may be prevented by wearing shoes which do not put too heavy a strain on the "arch" of the foot, but give it mild support. Many things besides shoes may cause flat foot, and a doctor should always be consulted for any continuous foot discomfort. Foot strain is also a cause of some kinds of backache and other nervous trouble.

The straight position of the foot—that is, with the feet parallel—is the proper one for both standing and walking.

If a shoe threatens to injure your foot, it is poor economy to keep it. Don't buy a misfit just because it is cheap or fashionable—it doesn't pay. Remember the doctor's bills!

#### VENEREAL DISEASES.

In former wars germ diseases killed more soldiers than bullets, but such diseases as smallpox, yellow fever, and typhoid were successfully controlled in the Great War.

Of all the diseases that handicap men in the Army, in agriculture, mining, lumbering, and shipbuilding, the venereal diseases (syphilis, gonorrhea, and chancroid) cause the greatest loss of time, money, and efficiency, besides untold misery. Surgeon General Gorgas said that if it were possible to get rid of all wounds or of all venereal disease he would rather be rid of the venereal cases.

If Germany had hired an army of spies to scatter disease germs among our soldiers and thus to keep them from the front, the nation would have wrathfully protested. If an American general had permitted infected persons to mix freely with our soldiers, he would, in effect, have been aiding the enemy. Venereal diseases are as bad as smallpox and almost as "catching." Yet every day many men and boys are exposing themselves to venereal diseases, largely through ignorance of the laws of health and lack of self-control. False modesty has caused silence about venereal diseases because they are usually caught from immoral relations with women and girls who, in turn, have caught one or the other diseases from some man.

Practically all prostitutes, and girls and women who may not be professional prostitutes but who permit men to have sexual relations with them, have one or more of these venereal diseases. Many such women are feeble-minded. They are to be pitied and avoided.

Here are a few more facts about venereal diseases which you should know for the protection of yourself and others:

1. Gonorrhea (sometimes vulgarly called "clap" or "a dose") can be cured, if promptly and thoroughly treated, without apparent loss of health, but it always has serious possibilities. In many cases it causes chronic pain and distress in the sexual organs, with severe mental depression. It may lead to conditions which cause loss of health or even death; in many cases it injures sexual power and fertility, and it occasionally cripples a man for life (gonorrhreal rheumatism). The loss of

health, time, and money caused by these sequels and their treatment may far exceed that caused by the original disease, which is in itself bad enough.

The widespread notion among the uninformed that gonorrhea is a mere annoyance, "no worse than a cold," is based entirely upon lamentable ignorance. It is absolutely false.

2. This disease sometimes persists in the deeper parts long after it is apparently cured. It thus happens that a man may give the disease without knowing it to his wife, who thereupon enters upon a period of ill-health that may end in an operation involving the mutilation of her sexual organs in order to save her life, or perhaps actually killing her. Much of the surgery performed on the reproductive organs of women is made necessary by gonorrhea contracted from the husband. Often such women can never have children. Should the wife while infected with this disease give birth to a child, the baby's eyes may be attacked by gonorrhea germs and blindness may result.

3. The other serious venereal disease, syphilis, infects the blood and therewith all parts of the body. For months after infection with this disease, a person may communicate it even by personal contact, such as by kissing; and articles touched by his saliva or sores—towels, drinking glasses, pipes, etc.—may sometimes carry the infection to others. Although the disease, under proper treatment, is not dangerous to life in the earlier years of its progress, the possibilities of transmitting it should forbid the marriage of the person until a competent physician has certified to his freedom from disease.

4. The most serious results of syphilis may appear years after its beginnings, when the individual has been lulled into a false sense of security by long freedom from its manifestations, and considers himself cured. It may attack any organ of the body. Among the diseased conditions produced in various cases are apoplexy,<sup>1</sup> paralysis,<sup>2</sup> insanity,<sup>3</sup> and locomotor ataxia,<sup>4</sup> and these often appear after the man has a family dependent upon him for support.

5. The injury to the individual caused by syphilis is shown in the attitude of the leading insurance companies toward those so

<sup>1</sup> Apoplexy refers to sudden paralysis and deep stupor caused by bleeding into the brain or spinal cord.

<sup>2</sup> Paralysis means a loss of motion or sensation in some part of the body.

<sup>3</sup> Insanity means disorder of the mind, more or less permanent, but without loss of consciousness or will.

<sup>4</sup> Locomotor ataxia means failure of muscular control and other changes due to degeneration of certain parts of the spinal cord and nerves.

infected—a purely business matter, devoid of all sentimental considerations. They refuse to insure the life of a syphilitic person for four or five years after the disease has been contracted, and then only upon special terms; for their records prove that syphilis tends to shorten life, and that the death rate for those who have had syphilis is double the rate for those who have never contracted it.

6. That the syphilitic parent may transmit the disease to his offspring is common knowledge; some of his children may be destroyed by the disease before birth; others may be born to a brief and sickly span of life; others attain maturity seriously handicapped by a burden of ill health, incapacity, and misery produced by the inherited taint; others escape these evil effects.

7. The above facts show why a father has a right and duty to demand a health certificate from any man who asks for his daughter in marriage.

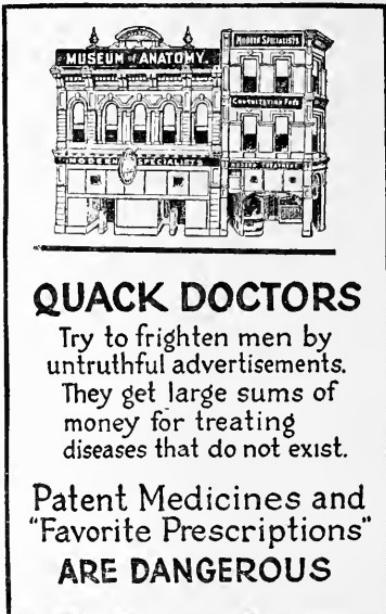
8. The only safe way to avoid venereal diseases is to keep away from prostitutes and loose girls. Between syphilis and gonorrhea, choose neither.

9. If a man contracts gonorrhea or syphilis he will save money and time by consulting a competent physician as soon as symptoms of the infection appear. Medical institutes and quack doctors are far more interested in your pocketbook than in your health. To rely on drug-store remedies for self-treatment is equally dangerous. They do not eradicate the infection, and it should always be remembered that merely covering up a disease does not cure it. A complete cure is never effected until the system has been entirely freed of the infection. Otherwise it may smolder and break out years later. In many cases attempted self-treatment permits the infection to secure such a hold on the system that a cure becomes impossible. The sufferer's condition eventually drives him to a reputable physician, only to find that he has come too late. For the individual to rely on drug-store remedies or quack doctors is to gamble his whole future, with the odds all against him.

10. Do not be fooled by "quacks" and "medical institutes." In many cities these unscrupulous quacks advertise to cure "lost manhood," "nervous debility," "spermatorrhea," "pimples," and things which have nothing to do with sexual health. They try to frighten the ignorant into paying large sums of money for the "cure" of diseases which do not exist, and the lies they disseminate help to spread venereal diseases. They have been actually run out of some parts of the country.

## TRAINING RULES.

To be really physically fit, however, it is not enough to be free from disabling defects. Many men were rejected from the Army simply because of "poor physique." You must be in good general condition all the time if you want to win out, whether in war or in peace.



To achieve the maximum of physical and mental efficiency you must follow five common-sense rules:

(1) The first of these is sufficient exercise of the right kind. Reading the sporting page, yelling in the grandstand, and watching the baseball bulletin boards may be enjoyable, but will never make a man vigorous. He must himself take daily exercise. Hiking, baseball, rowing and canoeing, skating in the open air, swimming, tennis, team games, general gymnasium work, boxing and wrestling where the air is fresh, are among the most beneficial forms of exercise. Any useful work using the big muscles actively is as good as sports.

Your daily exercise should be vigorous enough to cause you to perspire freely. This helps the body to throw off certain waste products which, if they are allowed to accumulate, will act as poisons. After exercising take a bath. A shower is better than a tub bath. A washbowl or any other contrivance is better than nothing. Warm water should be used first, then cold. The bath

should be followed by a vigorous rub down with a coarse towel, the whole process taking no longer than 4 or 5 minutes. The bath and rub down should produce a healthy glow of the body and a general feeling of well-being.

(2) Second, sleep in the fresh air, work and exercise in the fresh air as much as possible, and be sure to have the indoor air kept fresh during the day. Fresh air is almost a cure-all. It is usually more valuable than any quantity of medicine.

(3) In the third place, you probably need at least eight hours' sleep every night. A man can get along on less, but he can not keep himself in the best possible physical and mental condition. Do not lie in bed after waking, but jump out, bathe, and dress immediately. Avoid soft mattresses, feather beds, and too much covering.

(4) Proper food is another requirement. The system needs not only the kind of food that is rich in nourishment, but vegetables and other coarser food to give bulk and stimulate the bowels. When this is not done, one becomes constipated and is likely to have headaches and general ill health. Regular movements of the bowels are aided by an abundance of exercise and by eating plenty of fruit and drinking plenty of pure water.

(5) Finally, if you are to gain maximum efficiency and retain it, it is important that you should understand the relationship of the reproductive, or sex organs, to the development of vigor. This needs to be carefully explained, because, while the facts are important, they are not generally understood.

#### SEX HEALTH.

Sex accounts for the differences and attractions in mind as well as in body between men and women. The ways a person behaves in relation to such matters are called his sex habits. A man's sex habits have much to do with his health and efficiency.

Most men have received their first information about sex from lies, half-truths, and smutty stories, from pictures or shows, or from other boys or men who thought they knew it all, but had only filthy ideas about sex, and laughed at it. Most people were never told in a serious way by their parents or by a doctor what maturity, marriage, and having children really mean.

All that is best in modern life and civilization has grown mainly out of the sex impulses. Hunger and sex are the two great driving forces in the world. The hunger motives have given rise to our economic or self-seeking life; the sex or love motives have given

rise to the spiritual and social aspects of life, aspects which find their highest satisfaction in the happiness and service of others. Human affection, which is the finest and often the most powerful motive in life, is the highest product of sex in the world. That is why defiling of the affections so completely destroys character and manhood. With sex destroyed or debauched we should lose nearly all that is beautiful in art, poetry, music, and literature—for courtship, marriage, fatherhood, motherhood, birth, true family life, and all our most generous impulses are due to sex.



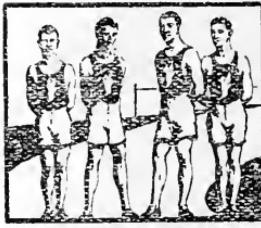
**A Healthy Body**

## WHAT GLANDS ARE FOR

Glands make secretions needed in a healthy body.

1. Secretion from salivary glands aids in digesting food.
2. " oil glands helps keep hair and scalp healthy.
3. " tear glands moistens and cleans eyes.
4. " thyroid glands aids in brain development.
5. " testicles aids in body development.

Nº4 and Nº5 make secretions that go directly into the blood.



## A NATURAL PROCESS IN MEN

About once or twice a month a fluid from up inside the body is discharged during sleep. This is called a seminal emission.

## DO NOT WORRY

This is natural and happens to all healthy men and older boys. Think no further about them. The fluid discharged during sleep is not the secretion that goes to the muscle and brain.

It would not be possible for a boy to achieve the full vigor of manhood were it not for the reproductive or sex organs. This fact may be made clear by referring to the activity of the various glands in the body. Everyone is probably acquainted with the salivary glands, and the glands in the stomach which secrete the gastric juice. There are also glands which make secretions that are absorbed by the blood. One of these glands is called the thyroid. If a boy were seriously injured so as to necessitate the removal of the thyroid gland it would probably retard the development of his brain.

The testicles are glands which, like the thyroid glands, secrete an exceedingly important substance. The blood absorbs this substance, or secretion, and carries it all through the body. It gives tone to the muscles, power to the brain, and strength to the nerves.

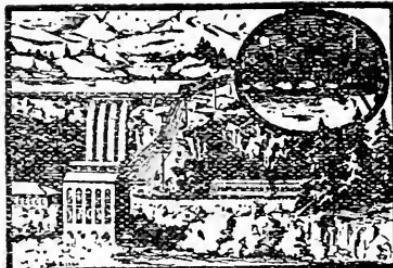
It is what caused your voice to change, your shoulders to square out, your beard to start growing. It literally makes a man out of you.

For the above reasons it is of paramount importance to a man's efficiency and happiness that his sex organs be kept healthy. For this physical cleanliness is the first essential.



### **THE CONTROL OF THE TRAIN**

**THE ENGINEER** is responsible for the passengers behind him.  
**THE YOUNG MAN** is responsible for the generations to follow.



### **THE CONTROL OF THE MOUNTAIN STREAM**

The Dashing Torrent Has Much Unused Energy When Controlled and Directed it Generates Power for Trolleys-Lighting-Factories and other Useful Purposes.

Inside the body, near the bladder, are certain small glands which, when a boy reaches the age of 15, 16, or 17 (though it may be earlier or later), become filled with a fluid occasionally discharged in the night. This discharge is called a seminal or nocturnal emission, or "wet dream." It is a perfectly healthy experience. It may come two, three, or four times a month, or only once in two or three months. To prevent too frequent emissions, it is well not to lie on the back when sleeping, or to drink much water late in the evening. If you keep yourself clean in mind and body, however, and ordinarily feel no ill effects after natural emissions, you need not and should not worry.

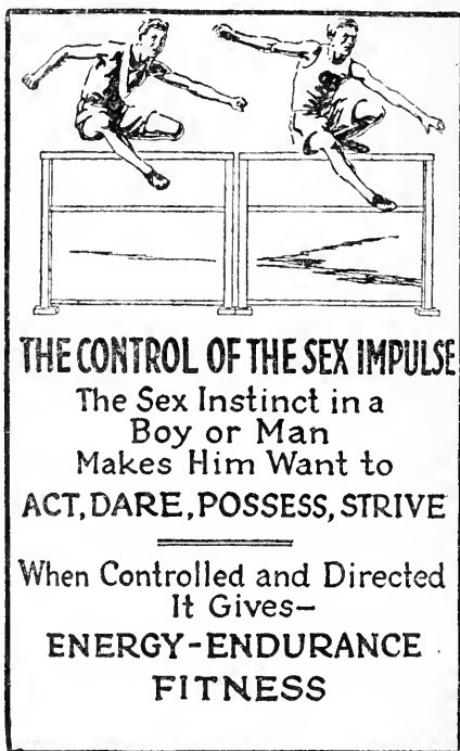
Some ignorant men or quack doctors may tell you that the sex organs must be used if they are to be kept healthy. *This is a lie.* Manhood is not lost by disuse of the sex organs. Real lost manhood is usually due to venereal disease or long abuse of the sex organs.

Famous boxers and wrestlers, explorers, and athletes who want

their bodies in perfect condition for a great struggle, keep away from women as part of their training. Even the ancients recognized this in training their gladiators and athletes, and reputable doctors agree that sex indulgence is not necessary to health.

#### CONTROL AND CONSERVATION OF MANHOOD.

Over-exercise or excitement of the sex glands may exhaust them and weaken a man. If a boy or man himself stimulates his sex organs it is called "self-abuse" or "masturbation." This practice



does not make a man insane, but it is so weakening both to the body and to the will power that many boys and men worry themselves sick over the habit. If a man or boy who abuses himself stops immediately, once and for always, nature comes to his rescue and aids him in recovering self-respect, courage, and vigor of mind and body. If you are tempted to abuse yourself, or have acquired the habit, you can cure yourself by athletics, fun, and your own self-respect and will power. Most boys who masturbate stop the habit before lasting injury has been done. Going to a prostitute instead does not really break the habit. It makes matters worse. Needless to say, neither kind of habit helps to make strong men.

Thinking about or looking at things which excite the sex feelings makes it difficult to control the sex organs, just as looking at food makes the mouth water, or thinking of a sorrow may bring tears to the eyes. Liquor makes it easy to lose control of the thoughts and hard to resist temptation, and it makes the body more liable to disease. That is one reason why the Government prohibits liquor to soldiers. While it is not always possible to prevent these things from coming to your attention, it is possible, by using will power, to direct the attention away from these harmful influences and center it on wholesome subjects. You can learn the trick of switching the thoughts away quickly from suggestive subjects to athletics, school work, or some "hobby" or other. A man who is "thinking below the belt" can not be 100 per cent efficient. The mind should not be made a cesspool, but a reservoir which is not to be contaminated.

The sex instinct may be either a destroying scourge or a great blessing. If it be abused, inefficiency and suffering may result for the man and his wife and children. If it be understood and controlled, it is a source of strength and of richer and fuller life.

The nature of the sex instinct may be understood by comparing it with other forces of nature. Fire is a great blessing to mankind. By means of it machinery is made to perform gigantic tasks. It warms our houses and cooks our food. The warmth and glow of a camp fire is a source of great pleasure to campers. When fire is controlled it is a valuable aid to man, but when it gets beyond control it may cause ruin.

The water above a dam becomes a source of power when directed into the turbines which run dynamos. If it be merely held back by the dam, it may accumulate and cause a break, resulting in a flood. To be useful it must not only be held back, it must also be directed into the turbines. So sex energy must be controlled and directed. In entering into manhood you may need the full power of your will to keep your sex desires from leading you into practices that weaken and destroy yourself and others. But you will be helped most by cultivating healthful sex interests and turning your powers of mind and body into athletics, work, study, art, music, religion—any constructive social activity. A man thoroughly absorbed in his work for others or in training for a career of community usefulness has no time or desire to bother with sin or vice.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH GIRLS.

Think of all girls as the future mothers of the race, and understand that one of their most important functions in life is to become the mothers of healthy children who will make useful citizens. A nation as well as a man may well be judged by its attitude toward women.

The man who is fair will treat every girl as he expects others to treat his own sister. There is no finer thing than the friendship of a true girl and a true man.

The man who seeks wine and loose women is taking a big chance. Far from being strong, he is weak. The man who does so, needlessly exposes to danger the body and mind. He is disloyal to his own best self.

In an accident at sea, when everyone is anxious to reach the life-boats, the rule for all men is, "women and children first." If a man rushes in ahead of them, he is looked upon as a coward. It is even more important for men to protect girls and women from other dangers, especially from those dangers which threaten to ruin their lives. We fought to preserve our homes from autocracy and rapine. Let us see to it they are protected also from internal enemies of disease and disgrace. If we were ready to die to protect our homes, we should surely live in such a way as to safeguard them.

Every man who has any principle believes in fair play. He despises cheating. If you are for the "square deal," you will adopt for your own life the same standard you expect of the woman you are to marry some day. The chain of human beings reaches into the infinite past and forward into the infinite future. But one false step may infect your own racial stock and blight the lives of generations to come, or even cut you off entirely from your share of posterity. If a man keeps his body in good condition and lives a clean life his descendants will thank him for a vigorous and untainted heritage. The spark of life is to be accepted as a sacred trust to be transmitted undimmed to future generations.

## DO NOT DESTROY--

*When you have no further use for this pamphlet give it to some boy of your own age.*